

Preservation, renovation in store for Provo square

By Scott Taylor
Deseret News staff writer

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PROVO — The purchase of Academy Square has brought new life to the historic buildings of the old Brigham Young Academy.

Robert G. Allen has signed an agreement with the property's former owner, Security Agencies Ltd. of Canada, for the \$1.4 million purchase of Academy Square, it was announced at a Tuesday news conference.

Allen, a Provo resident, is founder and chairman of The Allen Group, and a real estate investor, author and lecturer.

While new life for the property doesn't necessarily mean a new start, the buildings will be renovated, not razed, Allen said.

"It is our intent to strictly preserve the historical integrity of the buildings as they now stand," he said.

Allen was content in just announcing the purchase of the property at the news conference, explaining that the next three to four months will be spent in "creating a vision."

Academy Square has the potential to become "a showcase" of the community, with a combination of cultural and commercial uses, he said.

Possible uses for the Academy Square complex include office space for corporate headquarters for The Allen Group as well as two or three other corporations, he said.

Allen's corporation is already working closely with the B.Y. Academy Foundation, formerly known as Friends of the Academy, to develop part of the structure as a community cultural center.

In addition to office space, Allen said project developments could include a renovated theater, a museum and art galleries and studios.

"We're not certain what's going to happen yet," said Stan Miller, spokesman for The Allen Group. "We're entertaining a lot of ideas; they're all exciting and they're all expensive."

Total renovation costs are expected to be somewhere between \$5 million and \$10 million dollars, with actual development starting as early as next year, Allen said.

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life merit our thanks

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving. That's the one day of the year when we realize that being thankful is something we usually put off until we don't have that something any more.

My parents always fasted two meals one Sunday a month and gave the money they would have spent on those meals to their church for distribution to the poor. It was considered a privilege and an honor in our family. We had to be old enough and mature enough before Mom and Dad would allow us to begin the once-a-month fast with them. I'd been looking forward to this honor for months. I had finally convinced them I was ready to make that sacrifice along with all the other mature members of the family.

When the long-anticipated fast day came, I watched my younger sisters hawklike while they gobbled up their toast, eggs and milk. In my sanctimonious sanctuary on the couch, as I watched each one finish her last bite, I began to wonder why I had begged for this privilege.

That day, after long hours in church, I kept looking at the clock. Morning grew into afternoon, and I was still holding firm to my commitment. Then I remembered I had half a roll of Life Savers in my coat pocket. I figured I could sneak them out and carry them down to the bathroom, close the door and lock it. If I flushed the toilet while I rattled the wrappers, nobody would be able to hear me eating the candy.

LIFE AFTER BIRTH

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I grabbed the Life Savers from my coat pocket, hid them in my dress pocket and walked downstairs to the bathroom. Then I closed the door, flushed the toilet, and ripped open the paper. Sitting down on the heat vent to eat them, I stared at the cherry Life Saver between my thumb and index finger, about three inches from my mouth. Then the guilt hit. I flushed the can-